

—ARMOUR

TREATMENT

OCTOBER 2022

EPISODE TWO: **SAVE/TOUCH**

With a transfer in the offing and his profile growing, Harry seeks fulfilment from old flames and tries to rebuild bridges with a close friend.

June 2016. Harry looks at the headline. Aiden stands above him, weary from the all-night negotiation that led to it. It says that a well known professional player is gay... but doesn't name him or the club. Waves of relief. An enduring silence. The brothers look at each other for a long while, before Aiden turns to leave: "I'll leave you to reflect".

July 2016. Pre-season at Fountains. At the start of training, Harry's gaze lingers a little too long on new young pro, Zac, getting changed. Zac notices but doesn't say anything. Harry quickly looks away. After training, Harry and Aiden have a meeting with Isobel, Fountains' chairperson, about a new contract. Aiden is open that they are getting interest from Premier League clubs and that he needs to think about Harry long-term. Isobel's offer is nowhere near what Aiden wants. He says they'll be in touch. On the way out, Aiden tells Harry that Camden Athletic are making an official offer in the coming days - until then Harry shouldn't mention it to anyone. This is a promise of a regular spot in the starting XI of a side in the Champions League.

Harry sits in his parents' living room, alone, eating a sandwich. He has an article open on his phone: "Top English Player Caught In Gay Sex Scandal". He reaches the bottom of the article, then scrolls back up to re-read it. How many times has he done this? It borders on a nervous compulsion. He hears footsteps approaching and hastily closes his phone. Mum Angie hurries into the room, carrying a large picture frame. She starts holding it up at various points on the wall; she wants to display his first England Under 21 cap alongside a cheesy picture of him with braces as a child. He's embarrassed and not even sure if they get actual, physical caps for Under 21s. She sees he hasn't eaten much of his sandwich and asks if he is okay. He replies that he's just nervous about the match.

Harry parks up at St. George's Park, England's training centre. He looks nervously towards the facilities, then hesitates. He reads the article on his phone yet again. A knock on his car window makes him jump: it's Oli, a fellow Under 21s player that Harry has never met. He recognised Harry and knows it's his first time. Oli spots the article on Harry's phone, commenting that it's bullshit because they didn't even name the player or the club and, regardless, who actually cares? What does it matter? Harry seems fortified by this and accompanies Oli inside. Harry plays in the match, performing well. The commentator asks, "are you watching, Premier League scouts?"

August 2016. Sunday lunchtime. Harry and Aiden check into a luxury hotel in King's Cross. Aiden heads off to meet 'contacts'. Harry sits alone in the room, apprehensive. Charlotte arrives. She is moody at first - she states that Aiden is the only reason she is here. She explains how she felt at the camping trip and what it's done to their friendship. She then allows Harry to speak. He is apologetic and admits to his failures as a friend. Eventually, she permits him to hug her and agrees they can be friends again. Harry says he's so grateful for her. Charlotte says they're now going to her flat - she won't tell Harry why. Despite his protests, Charlotte forces Harry to change into an "out-there" outfit.

They take the tube to Notting Hill Carnival. Harry is joyous, transformed. He sees an openly gay couple and is clearly moved. His eyes linger on them. He is amazed by the vibrancy of the different types of people. One of the guys comes up to Harry and recognises him, "oh are you Harry Slade?" Harry is a bit short with the guy, but not rude. He clearly doesn't know how to speak to a gay person and more importantly, thinks that any 'gay interaction' could put him at risk of being found out.

Charlotte gets involved in a dance-off. She encourages Harry to join in but he tells her "absolutely not". A guy in the group grabs Harry's hand and brings him into the circle. Surprising even himself, Harry ends up performing a short dance. He blushes but has a huge grin on his face. Harry briefly chats with the guy after, who is originally from Bolton but has lived in London for 6 years: "It's so much more open down here." The guy explains he grew up in a mining town and while it's still pretty backward, there's no doubt it's getting better. Harry and Charlotte take a selfie together, both ecstatic. Harry gets a text from Mason: "That bird I was with at your party - Chloe - she wanted your number. Told her I'd let you know." Chloe's number follows. Harry looks anguished but tries to take the look off his face.

The next day, Harry is taken to a suite to meet the Sporting Director at Camden Athletic. He is sold a vision of the club's ambition and his role in the team, plus shown a promo video for Camden's new stadium that he'd be playing at once built. They talk about the prospect of Harry signing a 2-year deal with an option for Camden to extend to a third year. Harry seems excited but is still reluctant to leave his boyhood team.

Harry and Aiden pack in the hotel. Aiden asks if Harry wants to discuss what happened and how he is getting on mentally. Aiden tells Harry he needs to be more careful, to keep his wits about him. If he wants to fuck a lad, then he needs to make it his own business and make sure it's someone who doesn't have a clue who he is. Harry goes bright red and is insistent he isn't gay. It was a one time, drunk thing. He was led astray. Aiden doesn't help matters by saying "Sure it was, mate".

After getting home, Harry plays on his phone. He sends a bluntly sexual message to Chloe. She responds with a topless pic. Harry takes a shot. Chloe comes over to Harry's flat. She's dressed up. They have a few drinks and begin an awkward hook-up. Harry acts uber masculine and licks her out but after a lot of attempts, he can't physically perform with Chloe after all. He is uncommunicative and silent. He calls Chloe a cab and she clearly blames herself for what has happened. Harry - horny, tipsy and alone - sees Theo's follow request on Instagram. He accepts it and sees a few topless pictures of Theo. He starts to get hard... he sends Theo a tactless message: "eyup - sorry about what happened. Appreciate you keeping it on the DL. Curious innit." Harry goes for a piss... he comes back and checks his phone immediately. No reply. He turns on the TV... Footie. Vibrate: "Yeah dw, I'm not gonna say owt. I'm not a wanker." Harry gulps and replies instantly. "Would be good to say hi like. You free?." Theo: "what, like now?."

Harry picks up Theo in the city centre. Theo's first comment is asking why a rich footballer is in a shit car. "Hire car - Jag's fucked." They share an awkward and sexually tense journey. Harry hardly says a word and Theo does all the talking as they drive through the countryside. Harry keeps looking in his rear-view mirror: no one's following him this time.

The pair sit in the car in a deserted car park. Theo makes the first move... he purposely doesn't kiss Harry. He starts him off with a handjob, then head again. Harry keeps his eyes shut throughout. Theo whispers "Wanna fuck me?". Harry doesn't answer. "You fucked a guy before?" "Shut up. Stop talking". Harry gets out of the car. Theo looks at him through the windscreen. Harry motions with his head for Theo to get out of the car. Harry grabs Theo and turns him around, pushing him against the car bonnet. "Wait, you got lube and a jonny?" Harry shakes his head. Theo digs his wallet out of his back pocket and takes out a condom. "Just use spit." Harry struggles to get inside Theo but eventually does. Harry loses his virginity, aggressively fucking Theo.

Harry and Theo begin the drive back in the same silence that typified the ride there. Harry stops the car suddenly. Theo is confused before understanding dawns on him. He is furious with Harry, who tells Theo to get out of his car. Theo shames Harry for being a "coward" and not being able to accept who he is. Harry drives away, leaving Theo in the middle of nowhere.

Match day, Tuesday night. Harry stands next to Mason in the tunnel, awaiting the arrival of the opposing team. Mason turns and reminds him that it's WAGs night tomorrow; they've got it all booked and Harry needs to find a date for it. He nods with fake enthusiasm but when Mason turns away again, Harry is sullen. The match starts. Harry is out of sorts. Fountains are losing and Harry is responsible for a waylaid pass, which results in an opposition goal. He hears abuse towards him from the stands. He hits a shot on goal but it is easily saved by the keeper. Harry sees the keeper's pass out to his defender and barges the player in a needlessly aggressive tackle. Sent off again, Harry storms down the tunnel. Zac stands watching in his sub's bib. He asks Harry if he's alright. Harry doesn't respond.

Lorna speaks to Harry, having noticed a change in Harry's behaviour. Is it press speculation/attention or something else that's affecting him? She says she knows Harry is inevitably going to leave soon and she doesn't want to see him risk his future. She asks whether there is anything the club can do: could they help Harry get some mental health support – counselling perhaps? Sports psychology is a developing science in football and perhaps something can be done to help. Harry goes to the psychiatrist, Riley. Although there is a willingness from Harry to talk, he does not speak about the single biggest reason for his drop in form; eventually clamming up evasively, which greatly limits the benefit of the sessions.

The next morning, Harry rings Aiden and asks him to hook him up with one of his friends for the WAGs dinner. Aiden says it won't be a problem and to leave it to him. Before he hangs up, Aiden adds, "Come to think of it, I've not seen you with a bird for time".

Harry turns up at the dinner with his date. Paps are already there - it's clear one of the lads or their agents gave the press the low down. Harry is quiet and nervous throughout. Mason has turned up with an equally attractive date - he makes an active effort to kiss her within the paps' view. Harry questions his motivation and Mason admits he's aiming to piss off his girlfriend. Harry's date goes to the bathroom and Mason follows her - Harry is immediately suspicious. He waits a minute then follows in their direction. He can't find Mason in the gents and takes an alternate route back to the table. Harry comes across his date and Mason getting frisky, in plain view. Another of the players comes across the scene and asks Harry why he is letting Mason get off with his date. Harry grabs Mason and pushes him against the wall, shouting at him to go fuck himself. Mason turns his head and whispers to Harry, "Enjoying this, are you?" He nods to Harry's crotch. Whilst he's not visibly erect, the suggestion that he could be is there. Harry lets Mason go and storms out.

Harry lies on his bed and Googles "are there any gay football players". He reads about former Leeds player Robbie Rogers who came out after retiring, then Justin Fashanu - the only British player to have 'come out' whilst playing professionally but who later killed himself. Harry quickly slams his laptop shut.

Harry sits at his kitchen table, head in hands, with a cold coffee. His phone vibrates and he opens a message from Charlotte. They have been chatting about what happened with Mason; Harry has said he doesn't want to go to training because of it. She sends him a voice note in response. Charlotte tells Harry to ignore the press; he's going to have to get used to this, especially if he's going to be transferred to the top flight. She has faith that he can handle it. Charlotte's advice lifts Harry's spirits.

The Fountains First Team and Under 23s play a 7-a-side high intensity game. Harry and Mason are purposely kept apart by the coaching staff. Zac tackles a player and ends up on the floor near Harry's feet. Harry gives him a hand up and Zac gives Harry a broad smile in thanks before turning back to the game. Harry blushes.

Harry is called to a meeting room where Aiden is marching up and down, looking stressed. He shows Harry a splash on Twitter about his and Mason's altercation with accompanying photos. Aiden explains that Harry's recent behaviour and press attention means that Camden are looking at signing someone else instead of him: they've been put off. However, Aiden does have a potential offer from another northern club, Everton, that Harry now needs to consider. Harry says he'll just stay at Fountains. Aiden frustratedly explains that Fountains is not an option anymore as they already have a replacement lined up for him and are counting on the money from his sale. Harry is still adamant about wanting to move to a London club. Aiden is confused and angry with him; they are running out of time before the transfer window ends.

Harry calls Charlotte and she tells him he should go to Everton, "why wouldn't you?" Harry fails to explain. Charlotte battles for him to speak to her... eventually he asks her, "is London really as open as people say?" She asks him why and he pushes her just to answer. She says that it really is: she feels so much more at home as a gay woman. You don't get as many socially right-wing arseholes like her mum down here, or at least they're usually outnumbered. She asks why he wants to know - is there something he wants to tell her? Aiden bursts in: there's been a huge development...

Harry trains late on his own, trying to keep his mind off things. When he gets to the changing rooms, Zac is waiting there alone. Harry asks why and Zac explains it's to clean Harry's boots. Harry is clear that Zac doesn't need to stay late to do this - he can clean his own boots. Zac goes over to Harry and takes off his boots anyway. He looks at Harry in the eyes as he does, before walking away. There's an undeniable sexual tension. Harry goes to shower. He hears the door to the changing rooms lock. Harry's anxiety is palpable. Zac appears on the opposite side of the showers. They look at each other. Zac moves over to the shower next to Harry. Harry nervously asks, "So are you like..." He can't finish the sentence. They shower in silence, both looking forward - not at each other. Zac looks nervous too but suddenly turns and kisses Harry. It's not a peck, it's a proper kiss... Zac pulls away. They look at each other... nothing is said... then Harry kisses Zac back.

EPISODE THREE: SWITCH/TRAP

Despite an electrifying new connection, Harry's move opens up a dangerous world of fame, thirst and expectation.

September 2016. Harry is unveiled as a Camden Athletic player. He signs shirts emblazoned with SLADE '8' at the club shop. He comes off the bench for his debut in a top-of-the-table fixture and has a solid match. Afterwards he is interviewed by Match of the Day. He's asked specific questions about how he's settling in and his nerves about a potential England debut.

September 2016 - March 2017. A montage as Harry revels in playing in the Premier League and Champions League. He receives his first ever call up to the England First Team for a round of friendlies. He is ecstatic, as is Aiden. Harry receives a video call from his father, Aaron, who is so proud he almost cries. Harry frequently texts Zac with a tinge of sweetness, affection and romantic implications in Zac's messages. Harry is a little more conservative, but still eager - with lots of selfies and laughter. Harry repeatedly trudges in and out of a fancy hotel, getting to know the staff better each time. He smiles at them but also looks weary of the place.

March 2017. Having lived in a hotel for months, Harry moves in temporarily with Charlotte in her Central London flat. His fancy new flat still isn't finished and he can't bear the sanitised feel of a hotel any longer. She mothers him and teaches him how to cook. Harry properly gets into it. They have a glass of wine as they watch TV. The next show is "Drag Race". Charlotte speaks enthusiastically about it but Harry abruptly demands they watch something else. Harry goes to the toilet. On his way, he eyes a collection of seashells displayed ornamentally on a hallway table. While he is gone, Charlotte sees a notification from Zac pop up on Harry's phone and it's a cute message. She realises this is a romantic interest. When Harry returns, she turns the channel over to sport and hesitates before asking if he is seeing anyone at the moment. Harry says no. Charlotte presses the point, saying he's in a whole new world down in London; is he going to get on dating apps? She is careful to say there's "so many single *people* down here. Loads of girls... and guys... looking to date." Harry pauses... clearly wanting to tell Charlotte. He decides not to, but doesn't kick back against Charlotte's obvious choice of words. When Harry goes to bed, he composes a reply to Zac's cute text with a similarly cute response, kisses and all... but he deletes the message and responds with something more restrained.

The next morning Harry cooks Charlotte breakfast, delighted at his newly discovered and clearly natural skill. Charlotte gets an email offering her a position at the Copenhagen Post, an English language newspaper in Denmark. Harry looks disappointed but congratulates her all the same. Charlotte says she's going to donate blood that morning and that Harry should come with her. At the hospital, Harry and Charlotte fill out the mandatory blood donation form; Harry goes white when he sees the form states that men-who-have-sex-with-men (MSM) can't donate. He does his best to conceal a panic attack by pretending to go to the toilet. When he gets back, he gives blood. As he does, he passes out. A member of the public snaps a photo of Harry unconscious. Charlotte notices and forces the person to delete the image.

April 2017. Before his England debut in a friendly match, Harry gets a selfie from Zac. Careful for the other players not to see in the dressing room, Harry discreetly sends him a selfie back, looking genuinely happy. Harry performs well and lots of fans wait for his autograph after the game. A few days later, Harry misses a vital penalty in the FA Cup semi-final. They end up losing and missing out on the final. Now he gets abuse from fans. He voice-notes Zac about how he feels, letting his heart open to him and complaining how fickle fans can be: many of them will be the same people who cheered for him in an England shirt and at earlier Camden games. Zac sends a sweet message back.

Aiden nervously tells Harry that he's been selected as one of the faces of a new anti-homophobia campaign. Harry immediately goes red. Aiden carefully asks Harry if he's had any more dalliances with men. Before he can finish his sentence, Harry cuts him off and tells him to fuck off. Harry demands that Aiden gets him out of it.

Harry gets back to Charlotte's flat. He looks into her room, now partially empty since she has gone to Copenhagen. He clearly feels lonely. Zac calls and explains he had a holiday booked with his brother to Spain but his brother can't go anymore. Does Harry want to come with him?

The paper that ran the "gay footballer scandal" story runs a similar article, this time speculating that a player could be about to 'come out'. The story has clear negative connotations and implies that this would be controversial rather than a positive change, as well speculating whether the player in question has been "caught out". This increases the undercurrent of insecurity and anxiety that Harry constantly feels. Harry texts Zac and tells him he can't come on the holiday. Zac is disappointed, but understands: Harry is famous. Zac offers to look for places they could go where people wouldn't know him, but Harry refuses the idea altogether: it's just too risky.

Harry is forced to do the anti-homophobia campaign. The team attends the training and the trainer uses the tabloid story as an example. Harry freezes and his mouth dries when he has to answer a question. After the training, he is moody. He is one of four players chosen to explain to camera how homophobia has no place in football whilst wearing rainbow laces and armband. During the filming, a player speculates who the gay player is.

July 2017. Pre-season. Harry is now living in his own place in North London where he is often spotted by locals. He gets the team coach up to Yorkshire and his teammates speculate what reaction Harry will get from the "Abbey Road faithful" - the Fountains fans. Harry is invited to a Fountains City charity bash as a former player. He is reunited with Mason, who he has an awkward conversation with, and Lorna - with whom he later watches an Under 23s match. As they watch from the sidelines, they discuss how brutal being an academy player is: one minute about to hit the heights of the First Team, the next minute being released and down to the lower leagues. She uses Zac as an example - she reveals he rejected an offer from Doncaster Rovers, a smaller Yorkshire club, in the hope of making it at Fountains. She is honest that his chances are slim.

At night, Harry and Zac hook up in a sauna in a closed part of the Fountains training ground. They are nearly caught by Lorna who is the keyholder on duty and was checking the building. She expresses her surprise at them still being friends; they only met briefly at the end of Harry's time at Fountains and are on site very late. Harry uses comedy to deflect any awkward questions, saying he wanted a steam. Zac also lies, saying he was passing on his way out and wanted to catch up with Harry as they stayed in touch after Harry left Fountains. After Lorna's departure, Zac asks Harry if he's ever going to tell anyone about his sexuality. Harry rudely and abrasively replies "are you my fucking therapist or summat?" and marches off.

Aiden accompanies Harry to an interview with a local radio station. Aiden lets abuse from local fans loitering outside get to him and Harry messes up the interview. On the way out, Harry expresses his frustration that their parents won't accept his money, not even for their healthcare. Harry is rested for the match; he watches from the bench and discreetly celebrates when Fountains score. After the game, one of the Camden players makes an inadvertently homophobic comment in the dressing room and Harry forces himself to laugh along.

Charlotte video calls Harry from Copenhagen. Harry proudly shows Charlotte his new cooking skills and Charlotte proudly explains how her budding career is going well. She also reveals that she's got a first date that night and she shows Harry pictures from Tinder. Harry makes trivial complaints about being benched recently and says that people always think he's happy just because he's famous and well paid. Charlotte reminds him that

he can always speak openly to her but he says he's just being silly. The call is interrupted by Charlotte seeing a member of the paparazzi at her window with a camera. She screams and hides. Harry is terrified for her. She calls the police. Eventually they arrive to find the paparazzi has fled. They question her about the incident and it comes out that she is friends with Harry. The Danish police recognise Harry's name. They suggest they give her police protection for 48 hours. Charlotte rings Harry back. He is beyond frustrated and worried for Charlotte. He apologises that his 'name' is causing difficulties for her.

January 2018. Harry's performances haven't been up to scratch lately. He's played less minutes and, as a result, he hasn't made the England squad this time around. He texts Zac about having a few days off and being generally fed up. The next month, Harry is mid-wank when he gets a text: "Look outside your fucking window." Out in the street, Zac is leaning on the bonnet of an old hatchback with a grin on his face. Harry lets Zac up into his flat. Harry is just in his boxers and Zac spots gay porn on his laptop. Zac states firmly that Harry can either "wank himself senseless" or "fuck me senseless" this weekend. He commands, "Pack your shit. We're off to somewhere that no one will ever find us". Harry is speechless but the idea has excited and gripped him. He wants to so badly. And why the fuck shouldn't he? But he is still afraid...

Zac drives with a nervous Harry beside him, wearing sunglasses in January and a cap pulled low over his face. He turns the car speakers up: one of Harry's favourite drum & bass tunes. Harry presses Zac on where this mystery road trip is leading. Zac hesitates... "Kinloch Laggan". Zac has booked a cottage there. Harry is nonplussed. Zac clarifies: "Scotland." Harry's jaw drops. As the journey progresses, Harry grows increasingly comfortable and more confident, laughing with Zac and feeling free. When they arrive that evening, Harry refuses to collect the cottage keys with Zac. Zac rolls his eyes and goes to meet the owner himself. The owner asks whether Zac has come to one of the most remote and sparsely populated places in the entire British Isles alone...

Harry and Zac spend the evening indoors together, cooking food, having sex, and talking long into the night in front of the fireplace. Harry is happier and more comfortable in his own skin than we have ever seen him. The next day they take a walk along the coast. Harry refuses to hold hands despite there being no sign of life save for themselves.

That evening, Zac suggests they go to the local pub. Harry is obviously reluctant but Zac argues, "Look, on the tiny chance someone recognises you - then we're just mates. It's not like you have to shag me in the beer garden". Harry and Zac drink pints and share some whisky with the locals, who don't seem to have a clue who he is. Harry starts to come out of his shell in the absence of fame; however, when Zac accidentally lets slip where they are staying, there is a noticeable pause in conversation from the locals. Chatter soon resumes, but Harry abruptly stands up and walks out into the beer garden. Zac follows moments later, perplexed. "It's a one-bed cottage" Harry states. Realisation washes over Zac: that minor detail may have given away the nature of their relationship. In a tiny settlement like this, what are the chances the locals know the cottage and its size?

Back at the cottage, Harry and Zac get into a conversation about their situation. Harry admits how much he hates being a footballer when he can't reconcile it with his sexuality. All he wanted to do in that pub was kiss Zac, but was too afraid of the consequences. It's so unfair that he can't do what he loves and is very good at, whilst being openly gay. Zac says he understands; he's in the same situation. But Harry insists it's different: "Imagine me lining up at a Champions League match while the anthem plays and the crowd are just chanting 'Gay!' and 'Bender!' along with it!"

A couple of days later, Harry is back in London. He messages Zac and thanks him for a wonderful trip, emphasising how much he loved it; however, because of all the things they discussed on the last night of the trip, he thinks it's better if they "cool things off". Zac does not reply.

February 2018. In his hotel room before a Champions League match abroad, Harry logs onto Grindr for the first time. He creates a profile with a pic of just his torso, selects "top" as his position and "discreet" as his tribe. After filtering out a number of men visiting the city for the match, he finds someone who has no interest in the sport at all. He agrees to meet up in a few hours.

Harry learns that he's not even been benched for the match and sits in the stands. He panics when he receives a message on Grindr with the accompanying notification tone. Camden score and Harry's panic at being caught results in him not celebrating. After the match, he asks a fellow player to make excuses for him as he is "off to shag a bird from back home who lives here".

Whilst showering, Harry has a panic attack in anticipation of the meet-up. He forces himself to go, leaving the hotel in a tracksuit with his hood up. When he reaches the guy's hotel, his lack of a lift keycard results in him not being able to get up to the room. Harry takes out his phone to message the guy on Grindr. As he does, he is spotted from behind by a group of opponent football fans who recognise him immediately and question why he is on Grindr. Harry makes a swift exit from the hotel lobby but he is followed by the group of drunk guys who start to abuse and fight him. Harry tries to protect himself but is outnumbered. He is beaten to the floor but manages to kick the legs out from the main assailant and darts away. He runs down side streets and manages to lose the guys. He hears police sirens and, from his hiding place, witnesses the authorities arrest the men.

Harry limps back to his hotel, the immediate adrenaline and panic no longer dulling the pain of his injuries. He is spotted by a pap on the way in. He reaches his hotel room and, upon entry, slides to the floor in pain. He wells up but tells himself not to cry. His armour will not permit his emotion. He pulls off his trackies to reveal his badly bruised knee. He deletes Grindr off his phone before flinging it across the room in anger. He wipes a bloody tear from his cheek...

Harry slowly walks over to his phone and picks it up. He curls into the foetal position on his bed and rings Charlotte: "Char... I've got something to tell you."

EPISODE FOUR: **PLAY/CROSS**

Harry's career becomes the casualty of his harrowing ordeal but the unlikely aftermath results in a new opportunity for acceptance.

February 2018. Aiden turns up at Harry's house asking, "What the fuck happened?" He brandishes a press article with a photo of Harry on the streets, wearing trackies and hood up, entering Camden's hotel. They speculate on what he was doing. Harry refuses to elaborate. Aiden is brutal, saying Harry needs to get his act together. He can't continue to defend a client who won't be honest with him. Harry's only retort: "Am I only a 'client' to you?"

In the Camden physio room, Harry is told he's going to be out for a while and might need to go for surgery. Aiden messages Harry again, pleading with Harry to tell him the truth about what happened after the Champions League match and what is bothering him in general. "You up to that gay shit again?" "Fuck off Aiden." They continue to exchange texts until Aiden rings and reveals a sponsor has dropped Harry.

Harry has coffee with Charlotte who has come back from Denmark to check on him after his ordeal. She tries to talk to him about guys, but he is clearly uncomfortable talking about his sexuality and worried about being overheard. Harry insists they go for a walk with their coffees. Charlotte pushes him and he opens up for the first time about his sexuality. They have a jovial conversation about men and Charlotte makes him play a game identifying "hot guys" as they walk past.

August 2018. That night at home, an injured Harry watches Camden smash Manchester United away. He's delighted with the result but clearly frustrated at still being injured nearly 7 months later. Mid-match, Zac messages Harry and says he'll be in town in a few weeks for an away game at AFC Wimbledon as he's on loan from Fountains at Scunthorpe United. Could they meet up? Harry says Zac should come over to his place.

September 2018. Harry gets nervous waiting for Zac to come over. Zac stays over that night and the next day they sit in bed chatting. Zac asks Harry if he wants to come watch him play for Scunthorpe. Harry promises he will.

Harry walks towards AFC Wimbledon's stadium. He is spotted by some fans who ask why he's at a low league match. He lies and says he's doing some scouting on behalf of Camden... an obvious lie on reflection, but sufficient in the moment. Harry gets a call from Aiden about an Insta story of Harry on his own in Wimbledon - why on earth is he there? Zac looks around the stadium and can't see Harry. Harry exercises back at the Camden gym, annoyed with himself. After the match, Zac checks his phone: no response to his texts. He calls Harry, whose phone is off. As Harry finishes working out alone, the pain in his knee peaks and he crumples to the floor.

November 2018. Harry plays a reserve match. He is off the pace and is eventually substituted. Harry asks Aiden if he could look into other clubs and see if there's a loan option that they could take up for the second half of the season to get game time.

Harry and Aiden go to a Bonfire Night at Alexandra Palace. Harry keeps pestering Aiden about finding him a club. Aiden, clearly frustrated, snaps and tells Harry that he needs to be realistic: staying at Camden is not a viable long-term option. You don't bounce back immediately from an injury like Harry's and Camden - when his performances were questionable even before the injury - are not likely to gamble on him regaining full fitness. He raises the idea of Harry going on loan to Middlesbrough, a Championship club in the North, but Harry is dismissive of this idea without providing a clear reason. Frustrated, Aiden says that Camden have offered to pay his wages for six months and to send him to Buckman United, a sister club based in Portland, USA.

December 2018. Harry and Charlotte are both back in Yorkshire for Christmas. Charlotte goes to visit her mum, with whom she has a strained relationship due to her mum's far-right social views. Harry goes with her for moral support and they sit through a slightly awkward meal together. Afterwards, Harry expresses his worry about going to the USA alone, but Charlotte says it could be a new lease of life for him. A new country, new people and he can reinvent himself, "however wanky that sounds," especially as Portland is so liberal and gay-friendly. Charlotte tries to persuade him to get a dating profile - when he gets there - with his real first name and image. He refuses: it's still too risky. However, Charlotte does manage to convince him to add 'dates' to his Grindr profile, rather than just having 'right now'. As he will be much less famous in the US, it should be less risky. When Charlotte questions what happened with Zac, Harry questions how she even knew about him. Charlotte confesses she saw the cute texts from Zac last year. Harry admits that he didn't treat Zac well, but with neither of them 'out', it felt like whatever they had was doomed. Charlotte reveals that she's been dating this girl from Copenhagen for half a year. The girl, Tove, is quite a character and a bit of a rebel. She is coming over to England to do her Masters... Charlotte would love to introduce them.

January 2019. Harry arrives in Portland. He explores the city alone, admiring the unique craftsman homes and noticing the many Pride flags and murals dotted about the city. He goes on a hike to test his fitness after his long injury. As he hikes, he decides to listen to the BBC LGBT Sports podcast. He reaches Pittock Mansion at the top of a small mountain and admires an incredible view of the city and landscape below. He breathes in the clean, fresh air. He looks invigorated, renewed... at the apex of a revelation.

He returns to a spacious home in Portland that he is sharing with Bryson, a man in his late twenties. It transpires that Bryson is the son of the Buckman United chairman and studied Film at Manchester University in the UK. Harry is being temporarily housed here to help him assimilate to life away from home. The two seem to get on well, the one thorny issue being that Bryson is a Man United fan, which Harry describes as "bloody typical". Bryson invites Harry to a chilled out dinner party, where Harry gets on well with the other guests and notes how progressive social attitudes seem to prevail here. Could this actually be a place where Harry could feel more comfortable, be more open... maybe even build a life? Back in his bedroom that evening, Harry agrees to a meetup on Grindr - not a hook-up, but a real date.

Harry prepares himself as he enters a brewery tap room in Portland. His eyes cast around for any phones that might be pointing in his direction, but instead spots Jeff, his Grindr date. Harry is very nervous: this is his first real date with another man and it's in a busy public place. Jeff is flamboyant, shocking, forthcoming and unafraid to say or do anything. He quickly clocks that Harry is fresh meat on the gay scene. Harry shyly admits this is his first date with a man and Jeff lets him down with gentle skill: he is not romantically interested in Harry. He suggests they would be better as friends and invites Harry to a gay club, as an introduction to the LGBTQ+ scene. Harry refuses at first, but after a few shots with Jeff, he accepts the offer.

In the queue to the gay bar, Jeff flirts with anybody and everybody and talks through the complexities of the web of sexual partners he and his friends have shared. Jeff offers cocaine to Harry, who is at first reluctant, but gives in to peer pressure. Harry mentions his love of drum and bass and bemoans the fact that "Americans don't get drum and bass". Jeff tells him he just needs to know where to look and to trust him. He mentions that he needs to pick up "some molly" for the night. Jeff gets a call from his housemate who has lost his keys. Jeff asks Harry if he would pick up the drugs on his behalf whilst he heads back to let his housemate in. Harry refuses, saying whatever's left of his career would be gone if he got caught. Jeff notes that the drug dealer is hardly going to reveal himself to the police or the press, and besides, nobody cares as much about "soccer" over here. Against his better judgement, Harry agrees. He anxiously waits for the dealer who, to Harry's relief, is an amusing, friendly, middle-aged woman.

Harry finds Jeff at the rave and they drop pills. Harry begins to come up hard in the middle of the club – his first time. Harry has earnest, MDMA-induced emotional conversations with pretty much anyone who'll listen. He speaks with a gay guy called Kyle and they exchange numbers.

Harry texts Charlotte, telling her he wants to 'come out' to Aiden properly. Harry paces his bedroom, preparing himself. But when the call starts, he doesn't have a chance to speak before Aiden gets serious and tells Harry that they need to talk "business". Aiden says it's unrealistic that Harry will be playing in the Premier League again anytime soon. Aiden says he's going to have to let Harry go as a client - he can't keep Harry on for emotional reasons. Business is business and all his clients are now major players. Aiden tries to apologise, but Harry hangs up... utterly shell shocked.

Harry scrolls through Twitter and sees that Zac has been released by Fountains. He hovers over Zac's WhatsApp, pondering whether to text. His phone alarm rings and he gets up. He sits at his laptop and opens an email from Camden Athletic, with a link to a video call. He has an online meeting with Riley, the independent psychologist he saw years ago. Harry admits to Riley that he bullshitted him before and realises that he won't be able to improve his mental health if he lies. Harry admits to creating a siege mentality in order to deflect from what was bothering him because he wasn't ready to speak about his issues. His life is constantly changing and he wants to speak with someone about those changes moving forward. He does not explicitly mention sexuality and Riley does not press the point. Does he suspect the truth?

February 2019. Harry arrives at Buckman's training centre and meets his new teammates. The atmosphere in the locker room is different to that of an English one: perhaps more friendly and open. He's taken to a bar by some of the players where they ask him if he has a "partner" back home. Harry says he doesn't but that he's got a date at the weekend. He jovially refuses to reveal who he's got a date with but promises to tell them more if it goes well. A few pints down, Harry gets an unexpected call from Lorna. She is changing roles to North America Scout and is travelling to Seattle to scout their team. Would he want to meet up for a coffee?

March 2019. Harry comes off the bench for the first time for Buckman. He plays 20 minutes and looks sharp. His involvement is minimal but the fans chant "Let's go Harry Slade!" Harry's delight at being on the pitch again is evident.

Harry has another session with Riley and 'comes out' to him. Harry finds it difficult at first but is also more engaged in the conversation. There is clearly potential for drastic improvement in his mental health and general happiness as a result.

At Portland Airport, Harry and Lorna catch up. She tells Harry that she's now engaged to her long-term boyfriend and invites him to the wedding over Christmas. She asks if he will bring a plus one. At first, Harry skirts around the issue, but then he takes a breath and tells her he's gay. Lorna says she's very proud of Harry and that it "all makes sense". Harry makes Lorna promise not to tell anyone. Aware Harry is still awkward with talking about his sexuality, Lorna changes the topic to football. Harry admits he's had no interest from other clubs. Aiden dropped him as a client and Camden confirmed his contract won't be extended. He's still not got round to sourcing a new agent. Lorna asks Harry if he'd ever consider coming back to Fountains. Harry exclaims that it's all he could ever want. Lorna departs for her flight but leaves Harry with the promise of "I'll be in touch with the wedding invite. Oh, and watch your emails... the new manager is an open book." Harry watches as Lorna departs for her gate, an equal mix of excitement and confusion.

EPISODE FIVE: **PRESS/TURN**

Harry's new life and friendships abroad give him a chance to explore his sexuality, but moves from his circle may reignite an enticing, lifelong dream.

May 2019. Harry bottoms for the first time with Kyle. In bed, Kyle asks about "the meal" Harry promised where he'd finally get to meet Harry's friends; they've been dating nearly three months. Harry says Charlotte and Tove are coming over to visit soon and he could meet Jeff then as well.

In a montage, Harry wakes up at 5am in bed next to Kyle. He goes to the gym and works out furiously. He sits in the gym café at lunch watching highlights of Fountains' playoff match, eyes glued to the screen. Fountains score and Harry jumps up to celebrate, causing a scene in the otherwise silent cafe. Harry texts Lorna: "Any news yet mate?". Harry becomes a key player for Buckman. He is popular and successful. Fans buy shirts with his name on the back. He revels in his new role as right wing back. He continues to speak to Riley and his positive transformation is clear.

June 2019. Harry introduces Kyle to Jeff at a bar which is showing a Camden match. Kyle gets frustrated at Harry, who is clearly not paying attention to the group. Jeff makes a comment on Harry's distractedness and laughs, saying that Kyle should expect it when dating a footballer. Kyle is frosty and unresponsive to Jeff's jibe.

The next day, Harry and Jeff meander the streets during the Starlight Parade of Portland's Rose Festival. As they walk through the crowds, Harry admits to Jeff that he feels boxed in - he's not ready for anything serious and it's going that way with Kyle. Jeff tells Harry that gay relationships are different and that he's still a "baby gay". Harry admits to avoiding "the conversation" with Kyle. Jeff says that Harry's journey needs to be about him, not Kyle, and that whilst it isn't a nice thing to do, sometimes we all have selfish relationships for our own growth. Harry and Jeff pause to admire a float near a couple of men holding hands. Jeff strikes up a conversation, a mischievous glint in his eye. Harry hangs back several feet away, unsure of the situation.

Jeff returns, saying that they are two very attractive gay men who also happen to find Harry very attractive and quote, "hate soccer". Harry is taken aback but grins. Is Jeff suggesting he should pursue a threesome with them? Jeff tells Harry he is being silly. Not a threesome, as Jeff will, of course, be participating himself. Harry is nervously excited but reluctant. Jeff persuades Harry, telling him to forget about Kyle: "It's just a matter of time". Harry doesn't want to cheat on Kyle but Jeff demands an answer: "Are you officially exclusive?". It's okay if Harry is uncomfortable with it, but worrying about Kyle should not keep Harry from further exploring his sexuality.

They follow the couple back to a large, fancy townhouse. The couple mix everyone a G&T and lead the way into the huge back garden. There is a hot tub. Jeff strips quickly while Harry requires encouragement. Soon however, his confidence starts to grow. They all climb in. Harry is offered poppers, which, after being taught their use, he accepts. One of the couple slips to Jeff's side and they start to kiss. Hands everywhere beneath the bubbles. The fourth man edges towards Harry. Bathed only in a dim patio light, Harry kisses the neck of the man.

Harry comes home sheepishly. The next morning, he pretends nothing has happened. Kyle makes his breakfast and acts very romantically in comparison to Harry.

Harry is approached by a US agent to represent him. Harry and his new agent meet with the club physio who states that Harry's recovery is remarkable. His agent spreads the word and receives offers from several major English Championship sides to go on loan for the 2019-20 season, but Harry rejects the offers to stay on with Buckman. Camden agree to sign a deal that keeps Harry on loan there until the end of his contract.

Charlotte and Tove come to visit. Jeff offers to take Tove out shopping one day because "Scandinavians have such style!". Charlotte, however, has little interest in it. Instead, she and Harry drive to a secluded beach. They swim in the sea, then sit chatting on the sand. Charlotte has brought weed with her, borrowed from Jeff's stash. Harry is reluctant and nervous at first, but the beach is deserted, so they get high together.

Slightly high, Charlotte asks Harry if he's excited to meet his nephew as Aiden and his wife have recently had their first child. Harry laughs: it feels like only yesterday he and Aiden used to wrestle around their parents' house and Harry was fully in the closet. He used to think he really wanted kids, but perhaps that was just the way they were brought up, or maybe a desperate desire to conform. He feels confident now that he actually doesn't want that for himself. Charlotte hesitates, before revealing that she and Tove are going to pursue IVF, but Charlotte has doubts. She does want children, but worries about the responsibility and the pressure. Will it make life more difficult for a child to grow up with two mums? Should she even be worried about that? Should she feel guilty for worrying about that? What if she makes a mess of things? Her own mother isn't winning any awards and it's fortunate that Charlotte wasn't indoctrinated into her mother's way of thinking. What if she messed up this potential child? As she bares her innermost thoughts and feelings, she toys with a beautiful shell she has collected from the ocean. Harry is supportive; while it's obviously her decision and he'll back her no matter what, he thinks she'd make a great mum. Though appreciative of Harry's words, Charlotte looks forlorn and casts the shell back into the ocean.

Harry returns home from training one day to find Kyle waiting for him. He's perturbed by this; although they see each other a lot, they don't live together. Kyle should not just let himself in with Harry's spare key from under the plant pot whenever he wants. Kyle challenges Harry about the parade a couple of weeks ago: a friend of Kyle's saw Harry and Jeff leaving with two other guys. Harry never mentioned this when Kyle asked him how the parade was. What happened? What was Harry trying to hide? The conversation gets heated and Harry gets defensive, saying they're not exclusive - he's allowed to sleep with other people. Kyle backs himself up: saying that when you spend most nights together, then you're allowed to assume exclusivity. Kyle tells Harry they shouldn't see each other anymore as he needs someone more emotionally mature - a fair point and desire. Harry loses his temper and tells Kyle to fuck off. Kyle leaves, head held high but upset.

Harry plays a match against Minnesota United, who have a player who 'came out' as gay recently. After the match, he purposefully arranges to swap shirts with him and shakes hands. He offers him congratulations on his news and asks if he can buy him a drink. A few hours later, they meet up and Harry tells him he is also gay. He asks his advice and they share stories.

October 2019. Harry returns to the beach he went to with Charlotte. He rereads Charlotte's last text to him: "Yeah, we argued about it again last night. I don't wanna be a coward but I just can't get myself over the line with it". Harry looks thoughtful. It is a lot colder now. He stands at the edge of the water, slightly hesitant. Plucking up his courage, he braces himself, removes most of his clothing and plunges into the water.

December 2019. Harry flies back home to spend Christmas with his family and attend Lorna's wedding. Harry sees Aiden's new family life for the first time. Harry is great with his nephew. They play football together in the garden. Harry tries to tell Aiden about his sexuality, but Aiden just moves the conversation onto one of his clients.

Harry, Charlotte, Tove and Aiden have a family Sunday roast in a country pub with Angie and Aaron. The contrast of the two worlds is stark: Tove's open queerness and the classic domesticity of Harry's parents. Angie and Aaron

talk proudly about Harry's football achievements. They press Harry on when he will come back to England - Aiden makes his excuses.

Harry turns up at Aiden's. Aiden says he has a conference call and asks Harry to call him later. Harry pleads with him to go on a walk: he's got to go back down south soon and this needs to be in person. In the hills, Harry tells Aiden everything: that he's gay, why he felt he had to leave the North, the struggle afterwards, his mental health, his newly-ended "kind-of relationship" with Kyle plus Lorna's hint of a return to Fountains. Most importantly, he needs to have Aiden in his life. He's even considering 'coming out' professionally. Not having his brother there is terrifying. Aiden tells Harry he'll be there and embraces him. Harry asks Aiden to represent him as his UK agent; it is important to Harry that he keeps his family close with his business affairs moving forward. Aiden gets emotional, realising his lack of care for Harry over the years. He reacts beautifully, embracing his brother again and telling him he'll be there for him in every way.

Harry takes Charlotte as his plus-one to Lorna's wedding. It's a beautiful affair. At the reception, Lorna drunkenly says to Harry that good things are on the horizon for him. Beaming, Harry drinks more. He gets emotional with Charlotte and tells her that she's his best friend for life.

Aiden meets with Isobel, Fountains' chairperson, to whom he reveals Harry's sexuality (with his permission). They discuss Harry's potential return. Aiden explains the requirement for Fountains' openness in supporting Harry's 'coming out' - should he decide to go down that route. Isobel questions Aiden about Harry's life as a gay man. When she borders on the unacceptable in her questioning, she apologises and says that a football club is more than just one person. Aiden calls Harry to tell him the good news: he's got a trial back at Fountains. He tells him it's early days, but things sound positive. Harry beams.

January 2020. Harry goes for his trial match at Fountains. Isobel watches from her office. Harry plays well enough to be noticed, assisting a goal and playing with an impressive maturity. Lorna notes Harry speaking with the youngsters confidently, encouraging them on the field. Harry notes a circumspect photographer sitting in a car behind the fence, taking photos.

Harry looks at Zac's Insta and lands on an image of Zac on a holiday abroad. Harry WhatsApps Zac, asking him if he wants to meet up. Just a single grey tick. Harry messages Lorna asking her if she knows "where that academy lad Zac who got released ended up. Long story". Lorna replies, explaining that Zac retired from playing and she heard he ended up working as a kids' coach at England's training ground, St. George's Park.

Harry waits outside St. George's Park. Zac comes out, dressed in an England tracksuit. Harry ambushes him. Zac is awkward when Harry asks why he couldn't get in touch with him and if Zac recently got a new number. Zac admits he blocked Harry. Harry is understanding and apologises for how he acted. He's now 'out' to his brother and friends... he's a different person, he may even 'come out' to his teammates. Harry asks Zac to go for a drink, but Zac replies that he's dating someone and it's going well. The guy is really nice and he's been out since he was 18 - there's no drama or uncertainty. Harry pleads his case but Zac says he can't cope with Harry's on/off attitude and unpredictability. He leaves Harry and says sorry. Harry is heartbroken.

With a group of close friends, Charlotte celebrates landing a new job at a restaurant in London. Tove is away so she has reluctantly invited her mum. There's talk of a new disease in China. Harry hands Charlotte a present in a small wrapped box. He says he was going to give it to her for Christmas but wasn't sure. She asks if that's why he got her those "hideously flashy" boots instead. Harry laughs, outraged but amused. No one else has brought a

present so she pops it into her handbag and promises to open it later. Charlotte's mum arrives - it is awkward, every knows about her insane views.

Midway through the first course, Tove appears unexpectedly: she has cut her trip short in order to surprise Charlotte and join the celebration. Charlotte looks shell-shocked, glancing nervously at her mum and around the table in general. The meal progresses in an increasingly awkward fashion as Tove becomes hurt and confused at Charlotte's lack of affection. She is clearly unaware that Charlotte's mum does not know about her or her daughter's sexuality. Harry is distracted and repeatedly checks his phone, searching for any new emails from Fountains and occasionally scrolling Zac's Insta. Charlotte leaves the table to go to the toilet, her enjoyment of the evening visibly diminished. Joining the conversation half-heartedly, Harry accidentally refers to Tove as Charlotte's "girlfriend", effectively outing Charlotte to her mum. There is a shocked, tense silence. Charlotte returns to the table and arguments ensue. Tove is upset because Charlotte lied to her about being 'out' to her entire family. Charlotte's mum leaves, unsure how to react and devastated at the idea of her daughter being a lesbian. Charlotte storms out in tears.

Harry turns up at Charlotte's flat. When she tries to shut the door in his face, he jams his foot in to hold it open and she reluctantly allows him in. Charlotte reveals that Tove is pregnant after incredibly complex IVF but she's gone back to Denmark to be with her family. Charlotte says she feels betrayed by Harry, especially after everything she has done for him and how she tried to help him 'come out' when he was younger and kept his secret. Harry couldn't keep his mouth shut for just one night in front of her mum when he knew all about the situation. She tells him to leave and he acquiesces.

Harry sits alone in his childhood bedroom. He can hear Sky Sports playing downstairs, a discussion of his potential return to English football. Harry has no interest. Jeff video calls him. From the look on Harry's face when he answers, Jeff is immediately sympathetic.

Lorna and Isobel discuss Harry's trial. Of course Harry is a bit off the pace now, but he's still in good shape; with more training and matches, he'll get up to speed. Lorna says she's impressed with how Harry has grown as a person and that this would translate well into passing on lessons to the youngsters in the team. Lorna tells Isobel that Harry would be good to have in the dressing room and around the club. Isobel has reservations about endangering Harry and his family.

Harry attends the medical at Elland Road. He looks fit, passing all the tests until... the doctor seems concerned.

Harry leaves his family home in shorts and a t-shirt, football in hand. He tries to call Charlotte but she rejects his call. Harry plays football on his own in a caged pitch. His phone on the floor starts to vibrate: Isobel. He looks at it in nervous anticipation and picks up. Isobel speaks but the words are indistinguishable. Harry's face doesn't reveal a thing...

EPISODE SIX: **COUNTER ATTACK**

With his friendships and love life in tatters, Harry wonders if making history is worth the risk to himself and his personal life.

June 2020. Covid-19 headlines dominate the news. Talks of restrictions lifting in the UK.

Harry on edge, glued to his TV: Fountains in a pivotal match. A late goal confirms Fountains' promotion to the Premier League. Harry goes ballistic and calls his dad and Aiden, who are jumping around the living room. Tears roll down Harry's cheeks. He gets a video call from former teammates: they are drunk at the stadium post-match and celebrating promotion.

August 2020. Pre-season. Harry is out-of-contract. He failed his medical at Fountains in the January 2020 transfer window and ended up staying at Buckman for another six months. Harry persuades Aiden to reject an offer from a top second division side in favour of a rolling contract at Fountains. Aiden finalises negotiations and Harry is told that he will be training with the Under 23s for the foreseeable. Harry is frustrated at not being able to be back home because of COVID restrictions and having to sign his contract from the States on DocuSign.

Jeff drags a reluctant Harry out shopping, insisting Harry needs to find his "style". Despite his initial reservations about trying new things, Harry confesses he thinks earrings are hot on guys. Covid restrictions are partially lifted and Harry is emailed a business class plane ticket back to England... a hoop in his ear as he boards.

Harry goes alone to his local pub up North. Eyes are on him immediately as the locals try to ascertain whether Harry Slade is really in their pub. Harry's pleasure at returning to the sport contrasts with his angst at missing Jeff and Charlotte and his relationships with Kyle and Zac. An older geezer sits next to him at the bar and strikes up a conversation. At first Harry is reticent, but the old man's sweetness is endearing. He insists on buying Harry a drink, which Harry politely refuses until it's placed in front of him. The old man talks about Fountains City heroes gone by and what a local lad means to the club. He asks after Harry's mother, who he knows as from the area. Harry's mother is very ill with Covid and the reminder that this is a place she loves is powerful to him, endearing him further to the old pub. Harry misses a call from Aiden and heads off, but not before shaking hands with the old gent.

When Harry walks out of the pub he sees Theo, his dalliance from 5 years ago. He stops in his tracks just as Aiden answers the phone. Harry tells Aiden he needs to call him back. Theo makes the first bit of conversation, joking that Harry must think he still works at the pub. Harry doesn't say anything; Theo tells him he's now the landlord. He lives with his fella and they've got a kid, Simmy, who's adopted. All the locals know and they are relaxed about his sexuality. Harry offers his congratulations. He eventually finds the words: he thanks Theo for never telling anyone about his sexuality and apologises for how he acted. Theo waves it off immediately, stating: "you're not the first closeted masc guy who's been a dick'ead and you won't be the last". Theo asks if Harry is 'out' now - Harry nods but stops short of saying he is gay. Harry spots the 'For Sale' sign on the pub; Theo explains that Covid has fucked them financially - it was difficult for locals even before the pandemic. Aiden calls Harry again. Harry tells Theo it was nice to see him.

Harry types out a message to Charlotte about Theo, then scrolls up and sees his series of texts to her left unanswered. He looks gutted. Harry walks back up the hill to his parents' home. Aiden calls again. This time Harry answers. Their Mum's Covid has taken a turn for the worse... Harry says he'll be at the hospital in 30 minutes but Aiden reminds him relatives aren't allowed to enter.

Harry attends a training session. He's clearly upset and takes himself to Lorna. For the first time, Harry allows his bottled up feelings to come out. Harry calls Aiden for an update: their Mum is stable and getting better. He rings Jeff immediately and tells him the good news. In turn, Jeff tells Harry his own tragic health news: he has

gonorrhoea... Jeff asks Harry when he last got a STI test. Harry tells him he's never had one and Jeff replies, "WHAT!?". Harry visits a private sexual health clinic where he learns about PREP, a prescription drug that reduces the risk of getting HIV. He signs up.

Harry's performances in training continue to impress. He scores for the Under 23s. He is offered a loan deal with a top Championship side but rejects it, stating he wants his return to be with Fountains. In a meeting with Isobel, his sexuality is brought up and it's suggested that he could consider telling his teammates soon.

Leaving training, Harry finds Zac waiting for him. He is surprised to see him there; Zac clearly has something to say. He apologises for dismissing Harry before and admits he has been thinking about him ever since. The way Harry opened up to him at the training centre showed Zac how much he'd grown. Zac has now ended his relationship, realising that he did not have the same connection with his boyfriend that he had with Harry. Harry tells Zac that he is planning to 'come out' professionally, a further sign of his maturity. They both agree they aren't looking to jump into a relationship and pick up where they left off right away, but Zac has been considering a move back up north, if Harry was staying around. Perhaps they could meet up sometime?

Aiden comes to Harry's new flat in Leeds with bad news: the pap who took Harry's photo with Theo all those years ago has heard a rumour that Harry is about to 'come out'. He is going to release the photos and sell them on for big money if Harry goes through with it. Aiden was unable to dissuade him. What's more, he'll reveal to anyone who asks exactly *how* these images were prevented from publication in the past: Aiden bribed him, meaning Aiden could be removed from the FA's list of registered intermediaries and would no longer be able to operate as a football agent.

Harry is distraught. His homecoming and return to football is in tatters, with embarrassing photos about to be published and without his best friend beside him. He doesn't want to 'come out' anymore - especially if it ruins his brother's career. He can't do it. Aiden tries his best to talk him round: what he's doing is difficult, yes, but he wants him to be open and happy and he simply won't have Harry refusing to do it on his behalf. He says that the photos don't show anything Harry should ever have had to be ashamed of to begin with. Harry, however, is inconsolable.

Aiden visits Charlotte at her flat in London to plead with her to speak with Harry. She is defensive and admits that Harry hit such a nerve. Aiden explains the situation with the pap. He says how much Harry cares about her and how sorry he is and that they need each other. Harry is about to 'come out' to the world and she is about to have a kid. She doesn't give Aiden a straight answer on whether she'll reach out to Harry. However, after he leaves, she digs out the unopened present Harry gave her at her new job celebration. She finally opens it: it is a shell. The same type of shell she toyed with while baring her soul to Harry on the beach near Portland. The same type of shell she held when he told her what a good mum she would be and promised to support her, no matter her decision...

Charlotte turns up at Harry's flat. She brings a present: a cock ring. The tension is immediately broken. Harry asks why she has brought him a cock ring. She explains that some guy she dated years ago had bought it for them but when it came to them having sex, she sent him packing. He forgot to take it with him and it's been left, unopened, in her "naughty box" ever since. Charlotte and Harry drive to Fountains Abbey, a rural, ruined monastery from which the local club takes its name. They walk among the ruins and talk properly. Harry apologises for what his fame has done to their friendship. He admits he could happily just play football and not have to deal with fame or the press, but that these aspects - combined with his sexuality - meant he was often self-absorbed and in many ways, failed as her friend. They speak about their friendship and how Harry's decisions need to factor her in more. He tells her that he feels like a new person, with no more secrets and that his time in Portland has helped him. Harry asks Charlotte about the pregnancy and how she and Tove are doing. She reports that Tove came round quickly and they are already talking about baby names.

Charlotte says that, as he did for her, she'll support whatever decision Harry makes, but that she does hope he chooses to 'come out' publicly. She acknowledges how difficult it will be, not least because poor Theo is included in those images as well. Perhaps he should reach out to Theo? Harry has nothing to be ashamed of and this move could inspire generations of gay footballers - and sportspeople in general - to 'come out'. Her words seem to get through to him.

Harry plays in another Under 23s match. He looks calmer and more relaxed and has good rapport with the players. Lorna and a coach tell Harry that the club will aim for Harry to be in the matchday squad by the end of the season. He'll be on the bench, not in the starting XI and probably won't play, but it's a real achievement that he's got this far. In the changing room, Harry reads a text from Theo: "Hey man! Thanks for heads up. I've thought about it, and tbh, everyone I care about knows I'm gay and there's no way that should stop what you're about to do. It might shock my Grandma a bit, but go for it! Good luck mate." Harry smiles with relief.

Harry and Aiden make their way to their family home while Harry prepares to tell his parents about his sexuality and his return to Fountains. Harry is unsure if he can do it, but is relieved to see his mother. She is a bit frail but back home and well. After a lot of small talk, Harry 'comes out' and says he intends to 'come out' professionally too. His family are surprisingly supportive but an emotional argument ensues, with Angie in particular stating her worry for his safety. Harry stays strong and says he doesn't care, he has to do this. It was always his dream to play football in the top flight for Fountains. Whatever happens, this is the right thing for him. He cannot live in fear. He must choose a future and hope. At night, Harry sits in his old bedroom and watches clips of himself playing on his debut. He becomes emotional watching it.

In a montage, Harry tells his teammates that he is gay. Most are amazing, hugging him and patting him on the back. Isobel and the club put the plan into action; arranging an interview for Harry with Football Focus, security for him and his family, extra security on matchday, new stadium ejection rules re: homophobic chanting / abuse, Stonewall branding over all stadiums, LGBTQ+ training across all clubs (paid for by the PFA), a major social media campaign, coordinated newspaper and other press reveals, FIFA/UEFA/Premier League statements, rainbow laces and armbands for all players across the league and the 'reveal' article penned by Charlotte in Gay Times, along with supporting articles from other players.

Harry trains with Mason, who takes him aside and awkwardly brings up the time they wanked together. He tells Harry that he hopes his comments didn't make things more difficult for him in terms of accepting his sexuality. He tells him of a sexual experience he once had with a guy when he was 16 and says that he's sure there's other footy lads who are gay or bi. Harry lets Mason spew out everything and then just gives him a huge bear hug. Mason reveals he's nearly at the end of his career - he's only come off the bench a few times in cup matches and he has to accept that he's going to be at a lower side next season.

Mason, very sweetly, says he realises how "WAGs" is an exclusionary term. He admits he stayed up late last night on thesaurus.com and an acronym generator trying to work out a new term. He couldn't find anything suitable so he settled on CAMPs: "companions and married partners" and states cheekily, "It is quite relevant though ey? I was quite impressed with myself". He also suggests the next team CAMPs dinner could be at a drag night. Harry goes bright red at the care and thought Mason has put in but says "Just cos I'm gay now, it doesn't mean I want to go to drag. I enjoy it like, but just cos you're gay doesn't mean you have to do stereotypically 'gay' things all the time". Mason laughs and suggests he could help Harry find a gold-digging twink to take to the CAMPs dinner, even if it was just to get the Daily Mail up in arms. Harry says that he does in fact have someone...

Meanwhile, Aiden sits in Isobel's office. Aiden explains the whole situation around the photos, admitting his own bribery in the process. Isobel decides that the club should use its considerable resources to potentially sue the pap or any paper that buys the photos. At the very least they will send a letter of intent to protect Harry's

welfare. However, Isobel would expect Aiden to resign as Harry's agent if everything is to be revealed. Aiden accepts willingly: he's had a good run and there are many other things he could do. His brother is more important than his job.

Jeff visits England, gets a hotel with Harry in London and drags Harry to a number of tourist sites. Harry introduces Jeff to Aiden at a pub in Soho. They celebrate the initial success of Harry's 'coming out'. Jeff notes that Harry is not drinking. He says it makes him sad but that he is happy for Harry to get back into his career, albeit away from the life of excess they'd had together in the US. Charlotte arrives and she insists they all go to a famed gay club, to the protests of Harry and Aiden but Jeff's cheers of delight.

Harry laughs as Jeff screams to a pop song as a drag queen parades the stage. With it still being Covid times, the groups are separated by plastic barriers. Harry goes off to the toilet. Charlotte jokingly asks Aiden if he is losing his masculinity being in a gay club. Aiden admits he feels uncomfortable but he'd better get used to it. Charlotte tells him she's proud of him.

May 2021. Harry is with his family, Charlotte, Tove and Zac at the stadium a few hours before the match: the calm before the storm of 8,000 fans back at the stadium for the first time since the pandemic. Even the rest of the squad and management team haven't arrived yet. Charlotte announces that she and Tove will be having a daughter. Harry introduces Zac to Aiden - the first introduction of a man in his life to his family. As Isobel introduces herself to Angie and Aaron, Harry and Aiden share a moment together. Aiden expresses his pride that his brother is the first top division footballer in Europe to take this leap. Harry goes white - his brother's comments make him more nervous than reassured. Harry asks Charlotte if they can speak privately.

They go to a corridor and Harry breaks down to Charlotte - he is terrified of going on the pitch in front of thousands of fans, some of whom may have homophobic views. Charlotte reassures him, telling him that someone has to do it and he's always had the determination in his life to do so. She suggests he goes for some time alone, maybe have a light warm up before the rest of the players arrive. They hug and Charlotte says that everything is in place for his safety and that he will be remembered for his bravery.

In the changing room, Harry sends Jeff the official team sheet to show that he will be on the bench for the game. Jeff receives the text whilst backstage at a drag night, finding huge amusement in the irony of it all. Harry takes a shower. Solitary once again: nervous, but happy. Alone in the changing room, he changes into his kit, throwing an orange bib over his shirt. His phone buzzes with a WhatsApp from Charlotte: the picture of the two of them smiling at Notting Hill Carnival years before. Harry smiles and laughs at himself for being so soppy as he allows himself to cry a bit.

Harry walks through corridors, saying "Hi" to the security guards, the physios, and the commentators as he goes. More people have arrived. A nod of the head and a hug with Lorna as they pass each other, and finally, into the tunnel. It's empty. Harry heads out towards the centre of the pitch and pauses, looking around at the empty rows of seats. A faint smile. He starts to run.

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